

# STREET SHEET

## THE ART ISSUE



AUG 1, 2016 | BIMONTHLY | STREETSHEET.ORG  
INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS SINCE 1989

SPECIAL EDITION TO CELEBRATE OUR  
ANNUAL **ART AUCTION** ON SEPT. 15  
DETAILS ON PG. 6





# AN ELECTION FOR HOUSING, ARTS, AND A BETTER SAN FRANCISCO

TONY KELLY

This November's election in San Francisco is the most crowded in memory, with 25 local ballot measures in addition to almost a dozen candidate races. Nearly half of those ballot measures affect the arts and low-income housing in one way or another, making Housing and Arts the dominant topics of this political season.

Proposition S—restoring specific allocations from the City's Hotel Tax to the arts and to a new Ending Family Homelessness Fund—is the most well-known of the arts measures this fall, and perhaps the most popular. At the August 22 filing deadline for ballot measure arguments in the Elections Department's Voter Handbook, no one submitted any arguments against Prop S, making the measure essentially unopposed.

But there are two other measures affecting arts at opposite ends of November's ballot—Proposition A, the San Francisco Uni-

fied School District Bond, which raises approximately \$100 million to build a new School of the Arts at 135 Van Ness Avenue; and Proposition X, which preserves space in development projects in SoMa and the Mission for arts, light-industry businesses, and community services. All three measures—affecting funding, space, and education for San Francisco artists—are necessary steps toward rebuilding an arts industry suffering from a decade of underinvestment and displacement.

Affordable housing is also an arts issue. The natural partnership between City artists and arts workers with low-income housing and service providers, acknowledged in Hotel Tax allocations for the past five decades and present in the broad alliance supporting Proposition S, is now expanding again to include the wide range of housing-related measures on San Francisco's November ballot. Like other low-income workers, local artists recognize the need



"THE ARTIST AND HIS CIRCLE" BY ART HAZELWOOD.

to protect and expand affordable housing, prevent evictions, and provide humane and rapid

re-housing services to children, women, and men who find themselves without a secure roof over their heads, while fighting harassment and abuse.

To that end, more than 150 arts workers and homelessness service providers met at ACT's Strand Theater on August 18, to begin organizing a citywide grassroots campaign in support of Proposition S and related ballot measures. The next step in that organizing coalition is coming on Monday, September 26, at 6 pm at the Arts and Families Town Hall—a larger gathering of supporters at the 750-seat theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

The Arts and Families Town Hall is a descendant of Arts Town Halls in previous years. Those events were often forums with candidates for political office, dedicated to publicly establishing an arts platform and extracting commitments to support that platform. But this year, with the most important arts propositions ever on a San Francisco ballot and a long list of housing measures as well, it's much more important to organize our own communities at the Town Hall. This year's Arts Families Town Hall is focused on our own actions for this November's election, where we can truly restore a vision of a just and vibrant city, a Better SF, where the arts thrive and every family has a home. (For more information about the Arts and Families Town Hall, visit [bettersf.com](http://bettersf.com).)

Strong connections between the arts, housing, and a wide range of social benefits are not new. Ten years ago, when the San Francisco Arts Task Force was studying declining City support for artists and art spaces, the vice president of the Health Commission called the chair of the Task Force and said, "I really hope you are going to get more arts and artists in Districts 10 and 11." Well, sure, that's definitely what we want to see. But why are you asking? "Because we have too many emergency room visits from those neighborhoods, and

the arts can help reduce that."

In the years since that call, there's been more and more evidence that arts experiences and activities—both professional and community-based—help increase life expectancies in neighborhoods, math scores in schools, and local economic growth, while cutting down on things like truancy, ER admissions, and crime rates.

Which makes the numerous signs of artist displacement in the last few years all the more disturbing. In a *San Francisco Examiner* story last year, hundreds of artists responded to an Arts Commission survey, with just about every one of them at risk of being forced out of San Francisco.

"Nearly 600 sculptors, painters, musicians, writers, filmmakers and painters responded. Seventy percent said they had been displaced or were being displaced from their homes, workplaces or both. Twenty-eight percent, or 125, said they were at risk of being displaced soon."

Seventy percent plus twenty-eight percent equals a (potential) clear-cutting of artists from San Francisco—an alarming turn of events for a city that, for more than 50 years, has been recognized as an innovative leader in municipal support of the arts.

Many years ago, the Neighborhood Arts Program, created by the SF Arts Commission, was one of the largest recipients of Hotel Tax funds. That program created the Mission Cultural Center, SoMARTS, the African American Art and Culture Complex, and the Bayview Opera House as centers for community and professional arts. One of the main benefits of Proposition S is to bring the Neighborhood Arts Program back in its fullest form, with arts centers and events throughout the City, and artists on staff at all kinds of public facilities—schools, parks, clinics, drop-in centers, libraries, and so on—so every neighborhood in the City can have the full value of the arts at their doorsteps.

SEE ARTS AND HOUSING PAGE 6



"NIÑAS CON TALENTO (SKILLED CHILDREN)" BY TRUDY MYRRH



# CREATIVITY THRIVES AT THE HEALING WELL

ON A TUESDAY MORNING, I WALK UP TO FAITHFUL FOOLS, THE HOME OF THE HEALING WELL, AN ORGANIZATION THAT PROVIDES WELLNESS PROGRAMS IN THE TENDERLOIN.



I AM INTERESTED TO SEE WHAT THE HEALING WELL WAS ALL ABOUT, WITH ALL OF ITS WEBSITE'S TALK ABOUT COMPASSION, JUSTICE, LOVE, AND HEALING...



DESPITE ALL OF THE CHAOS AND NOISE FROM THE STREETS OF THE TENDERLOIN, ONCE INSIDE, I IMMEDIATELY FEEL A SENSE OF PEACE. TRANQUILITY. CALM. I FIND MYSELF IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE—AND IT IS VERY PURPLE.



I AM GREETED BY KATHY CURRAN, THE FOUNDER OF THE HEALING WELL, WHO HAS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN WELLNESS WORK. SHE, ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER, AND 25 VOLUNTEERS ARE BEHIND THE WORK OF THE MULTITUDE OF WORKSHOPS THAT OCCUR ON A DAILY BASIS, INCLUDING A 12 STEP PROGRAM, POETRY, STORYTELLING, YOGA, TAI CHI, ART CLASSES, AND CREATIVE WRITING. WE SPEAK QUIETLY BECAUSE THERE IS A MEDITATION CLASS GOING ON.



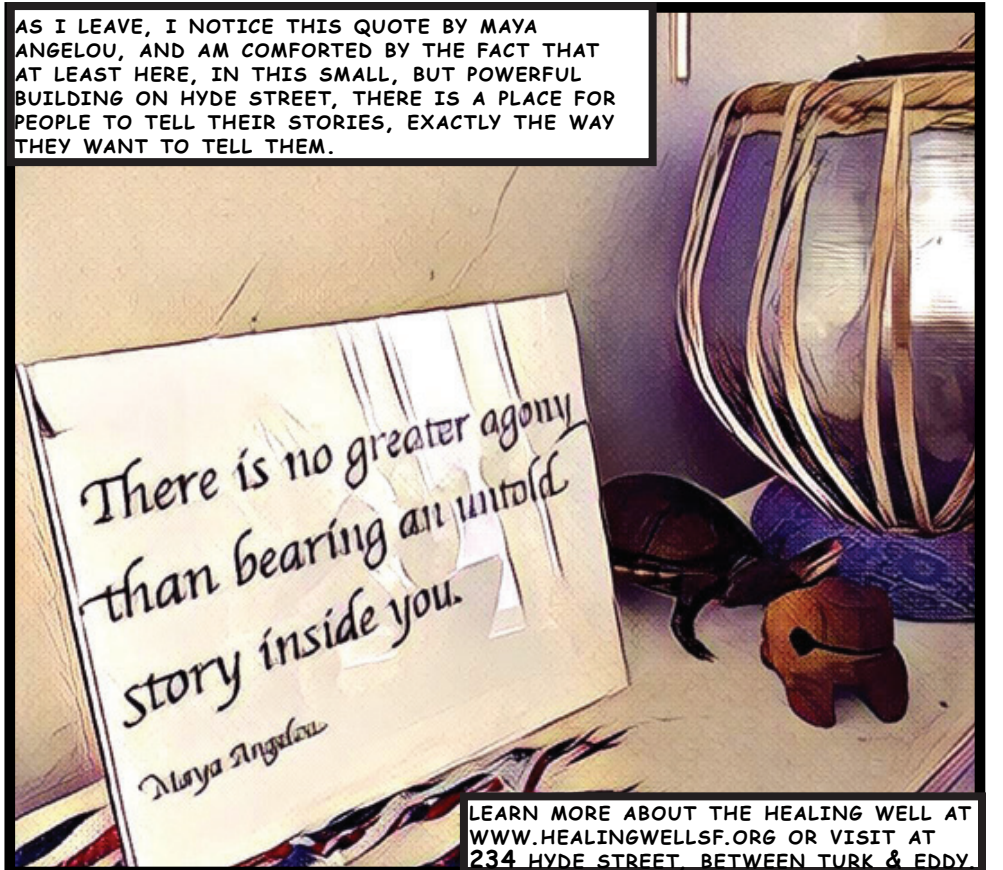
"THE ONLY WAY THAT PEOPLE CAN LIVE THEIR FULL LIVES IS IF THEY EXPERIENCE HEALING AND RECOVERY," KATHY TELLS ME. "THERE MUST BE A DEEP SENSE OF 'I BELONG' AND 'I DESERVE A GOOD LIFE.' I REALIZED THAT PEOPLE CANNOT GO TO AN INTERVIEW OR FIND HOUSING UNDER CHRONIC STRESS."

THIS IS THE LARGEST ROOM OF THE HEALING WELL. THERE IS A FISH TANK AND IT IS FULL OF ART AND MISMATCHED FURNITURE.



BEFORE I GO, KATHY GIVES ME SOME TIPS ABOUT STAYING CENTERED WHEREVER I AM. #1: BREATHE DEEPLY AND SLOWLY—AND PAY ATTENTION TO THE EXHALE. #2: WALK AROUND, AND BE MINDFUL THAT YOU ARE DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR YOURSELF.

AS I LEAVE, I NOTICE THIS QUOTE BY MAYA ANGELOU, AND AM COMFORTED BY THE FACT THAT AT LEAST HERE, IN THIS SMALL, BUT POWERFUL BUILDING ON HYDE STREET, THERE IS A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO TELL THEIR STORIES, EXACTLY THE WAY THEY WANT TO TELL THEM.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HEALING WELL AT [WWW.HEALINGWELLSF.ORG](http://WWW.HEALINGWELLSF.ORG) OR VISIT AT 234 HYDE STREET, BETWEEN TURK & EDDY.





Taraum with Princess.



Tony with King Louie.



Patrick with Brownie.

# ROBERT WELSH

I am interested in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco and its socioeconomic realities. The Tenderloin is a residential neighborhood offering images of stark reality and social differences. Twenty eight thousand people live in 40 square blocks in predominately single room occupancies and small hotels. This area is known for its drugs, guns, crimes, homelessness, and violence.

I have been volunteering in this neighborhood for five years and discovered a community here. I see beyond the negative images and have gotten to know a lot of the residents. I have experienced many of the more positive moments that exist, but go unnoticed by the majority.

I have an emotional connection with some of the folks that I photograph. In the Tenderloin, there are beautiful moments in everyday life. I hope the images resonate with others and that the general public can empathize with the people in this community.

A lot of people I meet enjoy having their portrait taken and are moved when I present them with a print. It struck me how fond they are of their dogs. I realized that for some, their beloved pets are all that they have.

[www.robertwelshphotography.com](http://www.robertwelshphotography.com)



May with Bobby.



Nieves with Penelope.



# HUNGRY FOR MUSIC IN THE HAIGHT

CHRIS B.

Some of them are too tired and hungry. Some of them can't let go of the place that gave birth to not only "the Summer of Love" but also protest songs and lyrics for many civil rights movements. Some can afford to make enough to couch surf around the city. These are some of the people whose names you probably won't find on the Internet, whose records you won't find in a store, but who have the need, both economical and spiritual, to sing and play music in Haight Street.

They are artists without the basic human right to safe, affordable housing in a city with a yearly budget bigger than that of the entire state of Nevada, according to Heather Knight from the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

"I'm afraid that this place is becoming a tourist trap," says Tazz Devale, who plays the harmonica and sings in the Haight. "I don't have anything recorded; I don't have anything written down. It's all in here," and points to his head with his finger. He sings his own version of "One Love" by Bob Marley, which carries the spiritual meaning of Rastafarian Vitality ("Let's get together and feel alright"), adding in a half-joke line "for one buck."

He has been homeless since he lost his wife. He also lost his parents and brothers. "I could probably afford a place more than 2 hours from here. But I want to be here. This is where it all began. This is where my friends are," and looks at them with a smile. "I haven't had a girlfriend since my wife passed away." Nevertheless, he does a little dance and plays his harmonica to the tourists passing by.

Music has been part of San Francisco history since its very foundation. From blues and soul, to the fusion of Latino music with jazz and rock, there was a time when the San Francisco sound dominated the counterculture movement, with great names that made its way into the mainstream like Santana, Grateful Dead, and Jefferson Airplane. But the fast gentrification and displacement and eviction of low-income families, educators, and artists (among many others), seems to be slowly giving up the rich soul of San Francisco art to the frivolity and cynicism of borderline nihilists, commonly known as hipsters.

The niche market hipsters created is making its mark on Haight Street. With the extraordinary changes in the

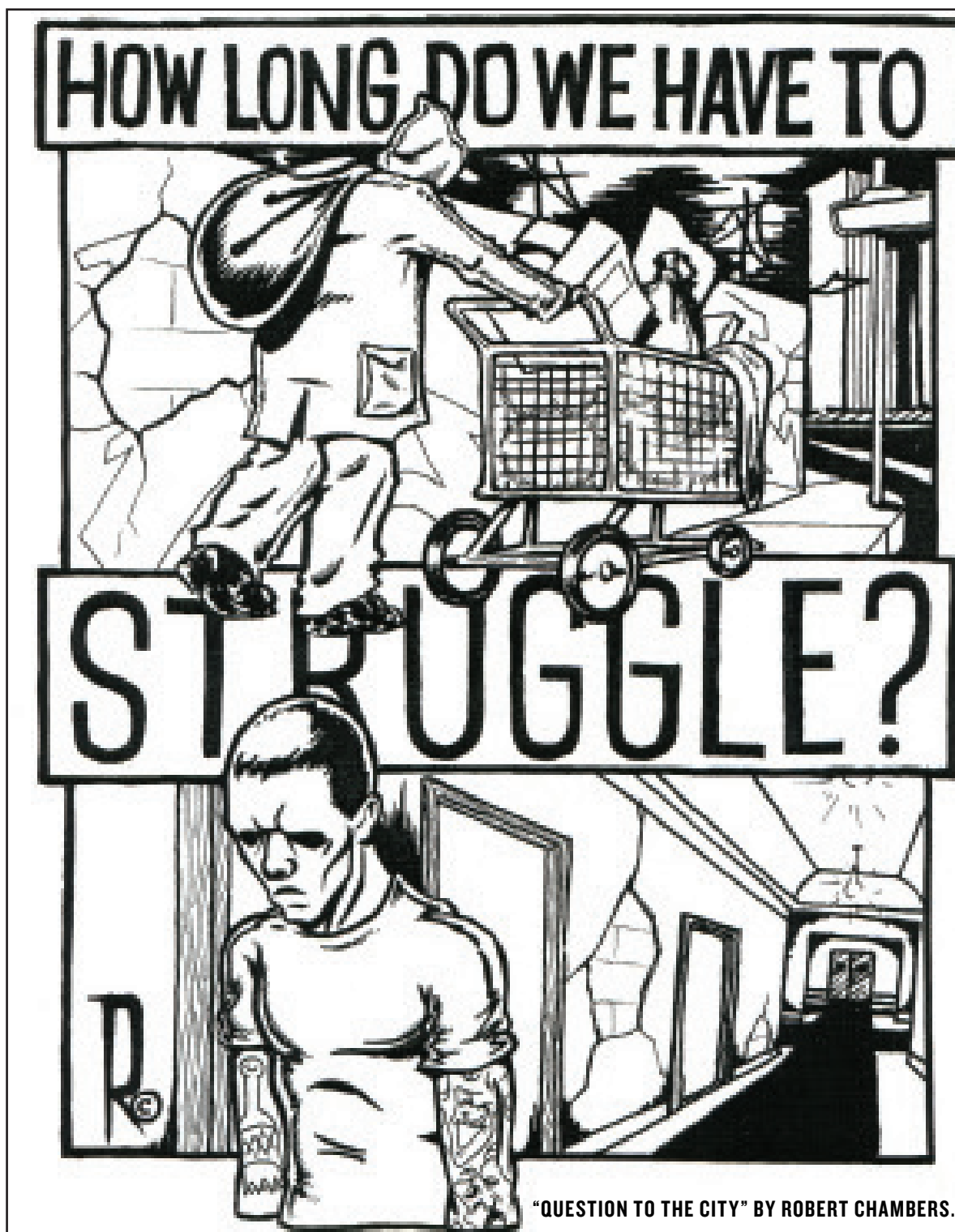
music industry with instant, almost valueless music at the tip of a finger that started with mp3 sharing and pirating, many have turned their back on the "mainstream" and started looking for obscure "I knew this band before everyone else" kind of music. In addition, old vinyl records, with their vintage seduction and higher sound definition, made a huge come back after CDs became passé. And many stores in the Haight are making good business out of them, as a clerk from one of the vintage music shops (who preferred to stay anonymous) stated. However, outside the vintage records shops there are many musicians whose music are just "Blowing in the Wind."

His guitar has a beautifully handwritten statement "Don't Let Your Soul Be Destroyed." It also has a sticker that says "Machines Don't Have Feelings." His name is Marquis and he says that the worst part of being a musician living on the streets is the fog and the mist, bringing up the health issues of homelessness.

"It gets in your lungs and you can't sing well. You can't perform at your full potential." At the corner of Haight-Ashbury, he sings an uplifting tune: "Let tonight be forever, and ever," and makes a self-reference to his appearance. He is hungry, he says he doesn't make as much money as other musicians around, and he is playing for food. His performance is impressive and many passersby listen to his full song, receiving a quiet applause.

"I'm a homeless with an iPhone," says Klever, in front of a popular music store in Haight. "You can ask anybody around here, anyone who works in these stores if they can make a living in San Francisco with their minimum wage. They can't. Minimum wage is worthless in San Francisco. I make more money playing here than working in one of these shops". For him, playing on Haight is a very serious business, and he "couch surfs around", still living without a stable roof.

All of the interviewed agreed that gentrification and homelessness is an issue that has to be addressed as a political one. It is in the hands of San Francisco residents to push for policies that end the overpriced rents and living expenses, and return the spirit of art and humanity to the city by making it affordable for artists like Tazz, Marquis and Klever, to live here. ■



"QUESTION TO THE CITY" BY ROBERT CHAMBERS.



"SPARE MANGE" BY LITTLE EDDY



The Coalition on Homelessness presents...

# ART AUCTION 2016:

## TRANSFORMING ART INTO ACTION

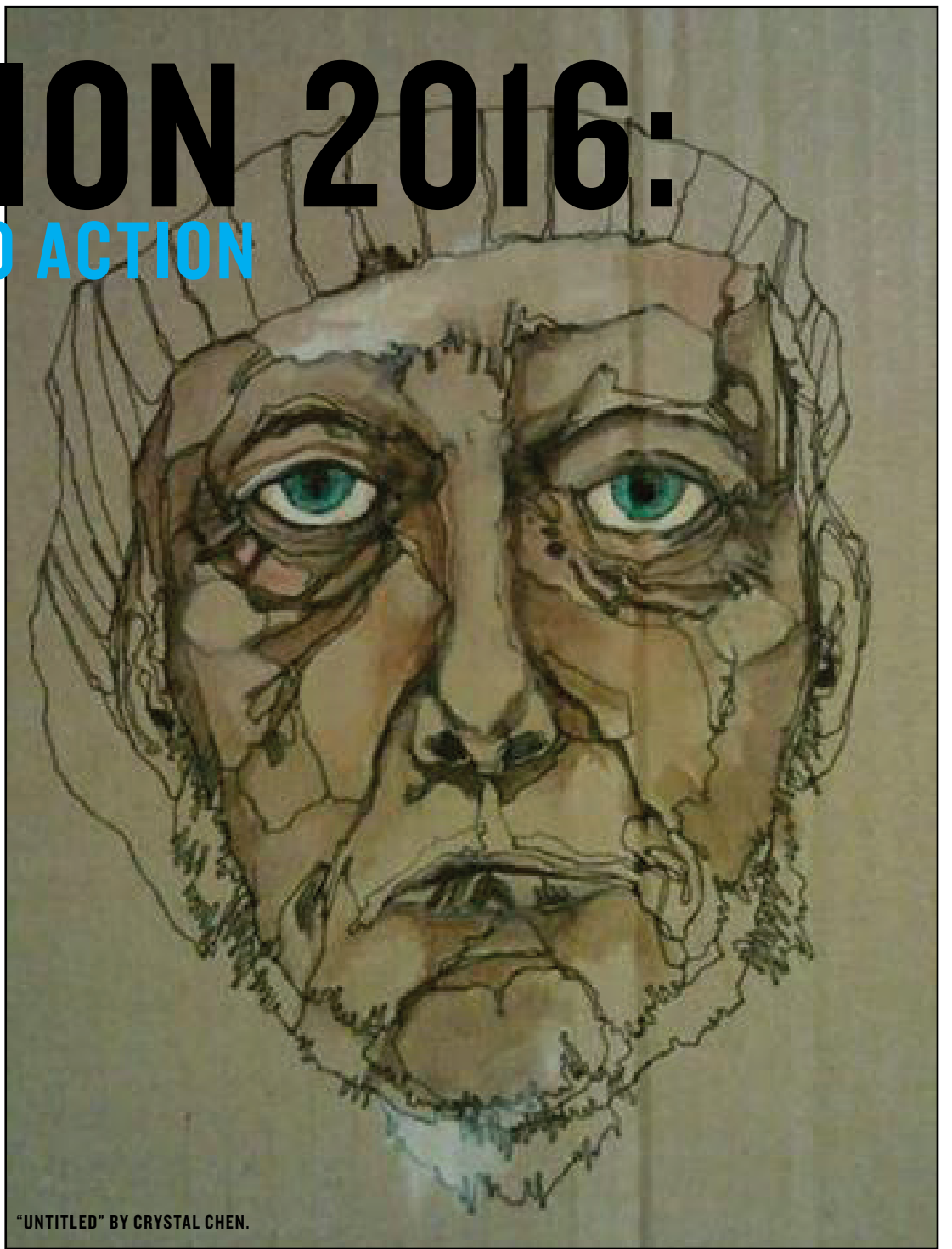
### RIGHT TO A ROOF

The auction showcases the work of over 150 Bay Area artists in a show benefiting the work that we do to end poverty and homelessness in San Francisco. Come enjoy complimentary dinner, live music, and an open bar!

**WHERE** SOMArts Cultural Center  
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For more event details, including featured artists, raffle prizes, and programming, visit:  
**WWW.ARTAUCION16.TUMBLR.COM**



"UNTITLED" BY CRYSTAL CHEN.

# FAME, NAMES, AND STREET ART

VLAD K.

Many people in society would assume that the words homeless and art are unlikely to be close to each other in the sentence. One of the reasons for it is our present understanding of the nature of art according to which the work of art is worth as much as the name behind it. For example, a plain canvas signed by Salvador Dali or Pablo Picasso could be sold for thousands of dollars. The most blatant example would probably be the so-called artist's "shit work" by Piero Manzoni. Manzoni sold tins filled with feces, and one of them went for over \$100,000 at Sotheby's, another for almost \$200,000 at Christy's.

Dali himself was known for his unorthodox views about authenticity. He used to challenge public idolizing of name in his own prankish way. For example, he was easily signing blank papers or canvases for anyone who asked for it, as if consciously seeking to inspire forgery. Dali's unwillingness to protect the authenticity of his own works turned into a nightmare for experts. He signed his works in so many different ways that considering the high amount of fake and imitation pieces, experts often disagree whether a particular signature belongs to him. There are many jokes about Dali's disrespect for authenticity, and the following one I believe

reflects the artist's attitude:

Dali was at someone's house who showed him a picture and said, "I love this painting you did for me." Dali looked at it for a moment and said, "It's fake!"

"But Salvador, you painted it right here in front of me!"

"I paint a lot of fakes!"

Dali was not unique in his questioning of authenticity and name. Malevich, for example, almost never kept his own works, but gave them as gifts for people and museums. For Malevich, the idea and concept was much more important than name, and so he cared much more about promoting an image than any name behind it.

Three years ago, the director of the Denver Museum of Contemporary Art dared to break all professional rules by organizing an exhibition of works without provenance and with uncertain authenticity. Adam Lerner risked his professional reputation as an art expert by coming out with exhibition accompanied by an "I don't know" sign, because an art expert is the highest judge whose voice defines whether a painting will be worth million dollars or nothing at all; he or she is supposed to speak with certainty, or else stay away as far as possible from unfamiliar area. But he based his bold decision on the feeling of authentic magic of the painting which he prioritized over its origin or its authentic-

ity. He wanted to rise over what he defined as "art as a game of names." As a result, he came out with an amazing book about the nature of art titled, "From Russia with Doubt."

Though it is not uncommon for geniuses of the past to die penniless after years of hardship (e.g. Mozart, Vincent Van Gogh, Franz Schubert, William Blake etc.), we still do not expect to find another Mozart on the streets of San Francisco. But for many people who have lost their homes, art is an important element of life. The importance of art in homeless life is an element of culture, a wider sense humanity, a way to heal, reflect, and imagine.

Street people know about the fragility of humanity by observing and experiencing the impact of sleep deprivation, poor diet, humiliation and loss of dignity, and constant stress. Many homeless people are very sensitive to everything that helps them hold onto their humanity. I have heard from many people that after becoming homeless, they began performing everyday activities like folding their belongings, decorating their tents with simple pictures, or going to the gym to take a shower with religious zeal.

Street art is definitely not a game of names. Many homeless people practice some form of creativity such as journaling or drawing even though they may not call it art. And despite the

moving, humorous, and insightful art that street artists create on a daily basis, most of it is dismissed and unrecognized. We must remember to appreciate all art—despite one's housing situation, level of income, or fame. ■

## ARTS & HOUSING

FROM PAGE 2

I think it's important to add a personal note here: In addition to running a theater company and working as an artist for more than 20 years in San Francisco, I was also homeless briefly during my college years, and my father died homeless, on the corner of 1st and Mission Streets, on the morning of February 1, 1984. So the combined need for arts and family homelessness support in the city is personal to me.

But I don't mention my history because it's unique, I mention it because it is common. Every reader of this newspaper certainly has experience with the multiple traumas of homelessness, either their own or with someone they know. And almost every reader of this newspaper, like everyone else in San Francisco, has felt or seen the life-changing potential of a surprising performance or work of art.

In the same way that having a secure home enables someone to achieve many personal goals and the lack of a home

crushes those goals, access to the arts leads people to realize their dreams, and lack of access to the arts denies those dreams. So when San Francisco backs away from its commitments to the arts, or to housing all its residents, the cost is far greater than just a number of people moving away or on the streets.

The City often takes its features for granted—its natural beauty, its diverse people, its reputation for drawing creative workers and artists. All these features are endangered in the wave of greed washing over our neighborhoods today. San Francisco is at severe risk of becoming a museum city, with plenty of artworks but no artists, of playgrounds and schools but fewer homes for its children.

Proposition S is one way San Franciscans can reverse that trend, to commit to being the city that we want to be. It could well be the most popular measure on the November ballot, and it deserves to be.

To keep San Francisco as a center for creativity and innovation, as a home for dreamers, join us at the Arts and Families Town Hall, and help us organize for Proposition S and the other housing and arts measures on the November ballot. ■

*Tony Kelly is a Potrero Hill activist and served as Vice Chair of the City's Arts Task Force in 2005-06.*



# WRITER'S CORNER

The Writer's Corner is a creative space for people to write and imagine. If you'd like to share your writing prompts with us, you can e-mail your responses at [streetsheet@cohsf.org](mailto:streetsheet@cohsf.org) or mail to Street Sheet 468 Turk St. San Francisco, CA 94102.

A little over a year ago, the Galeria de la Raza mural in San Francisco celebrating Latino LGBTQ love was vandalized and burned for the fourth time. Despite the hatred, the community united and responded with support and statements like, "You can't destroy love."

Write a poem titled, "All the Things Fire Cannot Destroy" or start a poem with the line: Fire will never destroy...



"POR VIDA" BY MANUEL PAUL

This writing prompt is brought to you by **GHOSTLINES**. Ghostlines is a Bay Area collective of poets, artists, and educators comprised of Ariana Weckstein, Gabriel Cortez, Isabella Borgeson, Jade Cho, and Natasha Huey. We are committed to using art to cultivate empathy. To disrupt violent systems and thought. To nurture and challenge ourselves and our communities to rise. Through poetry, short stories, visual art, and the classroom, our work seeks to honor our pasts, create alternate realities, explore parallel universes, and imagine new, just futures. We seek to build on the whispers of our ancestors. We seek to remain ever evolving. We write from the spirit—for the hidden parts of ourselves, the ghosts of our histories, and the stories we want to leave behind.

[HTTP://GHOSTLINESCOLLECTIVE.TUMBLR.COM/](http://ghostlinescollective.tumblr.com/)

## COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The Street Sheet is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: They bring their agenda to us. We then turn that agenda into powerful campaigns that are fleshed out at our work group meetings, where homeless people come together with their other community allies to win housing and human rights for all homeless and poor people.

## WORKGROUP MEETINGS

AT 468 TURK STREET

HOUSING JUSTICE WORK GROUP	Every Tuesday at noon
HUMAN RIGHTS WORK GROUP	Every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.
STREET SHEET ORIENTATION	Monday–Tuesday from 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
STREET SHEET DISTRIBUTION	Monday–Friday from 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

To learn more about COH workgroup meetings, contact us at : 415-346-3740, or go at : [www.cohsf.org](http://www.cohsf.org)

## STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

- Lisa-Marie Alatorre • Julia D'Antonio • Chris B • Regina Bates • Katie Bernock • Paul Boden • Miguel Carrera • Mikey Chapman • Kelley Cutler • Will Daley • Lydia Ely • Eva Ebsen • Matthew Gerring • Raúl Fernández-Berriozabel • Jennifer Friedenbach • Lesley Haddock • Karna Hess • TJ Johnston • Vlad K. • Jason Law • Sam Lew • Chance Martin • Scott Nelson • Irma Núñez • Bob Offer-Westort • Jesus Perez • Mike Russo •

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VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 468 TURK STREET (between Larkin & Hyde)

## SPECIAL THANKS

The staff and volunteers of the Coalition on Homelessness thank the following STREET SHEET. Your continued support has been vital in keeping the STREET SHEET on the streets since 1989.

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THE VIEW FROM THE STREET

Helping us to reflect on the daily life of our streets, photographers offer one picture that represents their personal take on urban life.



The Pursuit of Happiness, Mission Street, San Francisco

PHOTO: J-B LEVY

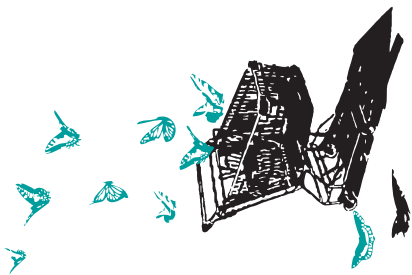
**About the artist:** Jean-Benoit Levy is not a photographer. Educated in graphic design at the Basel School of Design in Switzerland, he moved in San Francisco in 2001. He grew up in an artistic household in which both of his parents were professional photographers. Known more for his poster-creations where he combines text and photography, JBL works on projects emphasizing visual design, mostly for print. He has a wide experience as lecturer and teaches at San Jose State University since 2006. He redesigned the Street Sheet in 2014.

**About the photo:** It is always good to remember the following statement which can be found on the second section of the US Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable; that all men are created equal & independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness.” ■

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